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MONTANA Industrial Horizons
STATE PLANNING BOARD Summer Issue, 1961

PEAT PROCESSING, USE INCREASING

The U. S. Government considers its relatively untapped peat deposits as a valuable natural resource. Peat lands surveyed between 1914 and 1919 by USGS showed reserves estimated at 13.8 billion tons. These reserves have remained virtually intact as less than .05 per cent of the total has been excavated.

Much of the peat used in this country has been imported—41 per cent in 1959. However, U.S. production has been increasing in recent years. Production in 1959, according to the latest report of the U. S. Bureau of Mines, of 419,460 net tons was three times the average for 1947-49 and 28 per cent more than in 1958.

Ninety-four per cent is sold for general soil improvement, second largest use is for potting soils, other uses are in mushroom beds, earthworm culture, and golf course greens.

Domestic peat is now distributed nationally, whereas only a few years ago virtually all of it was consumed within the producing area. Packaged sales have increased steadily since the introduction of synthetic (chiefly polyethylene) materials which provide an inexpensive material for packaging.

In Montana alone, consumption increased from 49 net tons in 1958 to 200 net tons in 1959.

Since 1957, four firms are known to have started processing peat and/or peat moss in Montana, three of these just since 1960. The following is a brief account from information sent to **Industrial Horizons** by the four companies:

Montana Processors

TRACANA ENTERPRISES, INC. James A. Toole, President, Harlowton, Montana.

A greenhouse operator, elk hunting in the Big Belt Mountains, discovered this peat bed. Noting that the grass and tree growth was more luxuriant than in surrounding areas, he had the soil tested and found that it was a "live" peat moss deposit (not depleted of plant food like most peat moss) containing over ten trace elements of compounds necessary for balanced plant growth.

Stacking Packaged Peat Moss

As a result, Tracana Enterprises, Inc., was organized and a factory established at Harlowton to process and bag the peat moss. Students at Rocky Mt. College have run tests with it on African violets and find that plants grown in Tracana at six months are double in size to those grown in regular violet soil.

In addition, the soil beneath the peat moss layer was found to contain a number of minerals important to plant life and this is being processed and bagged for market. It can be applied as a powder, mixed with water and sprayed, or fed into irrigation ditches to be carried to fields.

The peat moss and mineral are on the market and being sold under the trade name of Tracana. The plant employs seven persons.

(Continued on page 3)

Briquets Made From Sawmill Wastes

Backyard Chefs Can Now Barbecue That Montana Treasure Steak Over Montana-Made Briquets.

Big Bear, Inc., at Pablo, has started full-scale production of high quality briquets utilizing softwood shavings from the Plum Creek Lumber Co. sawmill, located just next door.

The decision to locate the $250,000 plant at Pablo on the Flathead Indian Reservation was given impetus when the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes became interested in it as a source of employment for tribal members and agreed to contribute $35,000 toward construction of buildings. Through cooperation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in selection of the men, they will be given on-the-job training and the Tribe will receive approximately 8 per cent on their investment until such time as sale of the buildings to the company is negotiated.

Process Unique

Unique in the manufacturing process is use of a rotary kiln which makes the process continuous. A batch type operation similar to a coke oven is the common method. The new process was developed at Montana State College. Tests show the charcoal briquets have no offensive odors, emit no sparks, little or no smoke, exhibit a high heating value, and ignite easier than briquets previously on the market.

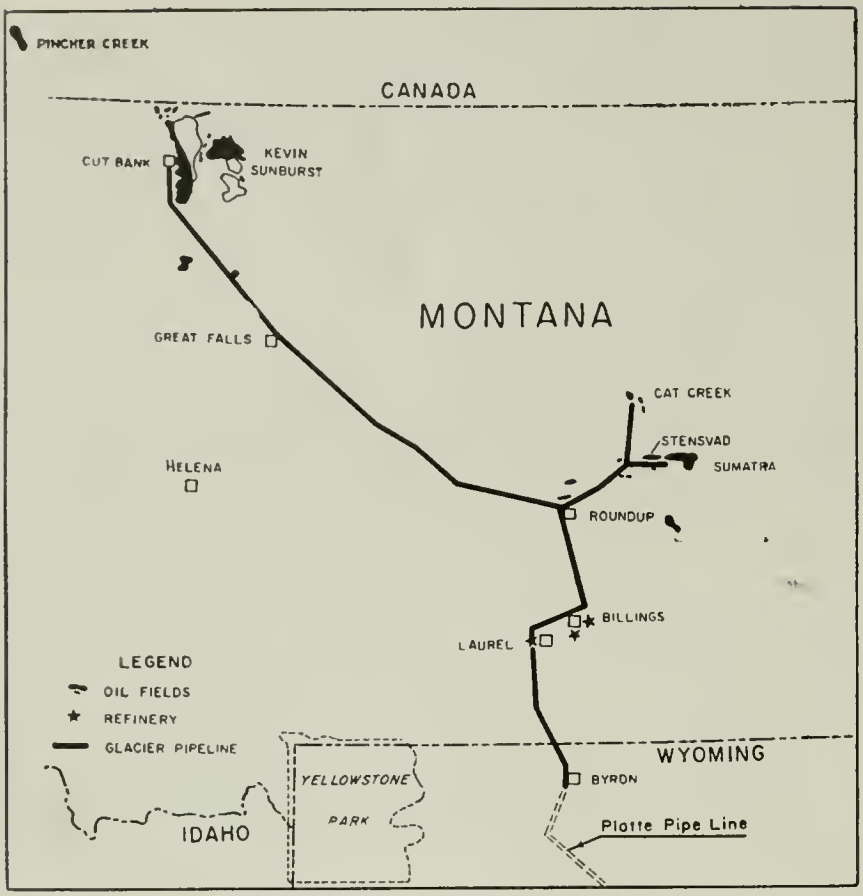
The product is shipped throughout the country, orders coming from Spokane, Salt Lake City, Portland, Seattle, Denver, Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula.

The plant currently employs 20 men, operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and produces about 15 tons of briquets per day.

—Flathead Courier Photo

Big Bear briquet plant at Pablo, Plum Creek Lumber Co. in background

Glacier Completes Pipeline Across State



A 433-mile crude oil pipeline, extending from Cut Bank across Montana to Byron, Wyoming, has been completed by Glacier Pipe Line Co. This $13.5 million line provides Montana oil producers with a pipe line outlet to major points of the United States via the Platte pipe line connection at Byron.

Officials of the company said, "This access to the nation's major crude oil producers was designed to serve as a stimulation to the entire economy of Montana and to the Rocky Mountain Region."

The Glacier system has an initial capacity of 50,000 barrels daily. Current daily production in the areas served is about 26,000.

W. L. Kygar, president of Continental Pipe Line Co., joint owners, said that the Glacier line should more than double the exploration activity in these areas, and also spur production of pent-up reserves in Montana and result in broader markets for Montana crude oil.

New Workmen's Compensation Co. Formed

A new firm known as Industrial Compensation Co. has recently been organized in Billings and incorporated in Montana for the purpose of writing workmen's compensation insurance.

The new company says that under Montana law approximately 75 to 80 per cent of all employers are required to carry workmen's compensation for their employes so that there will be some form of income in the event an employe is injured, disabled, or killed in an industrial accident. The companies covered under this law have three alternatives as to where to buy workmen's compensation insurance: (1) insure with the state fund, administered by the Montana Industrial Accident Board, (2) insure with a private company, (3) or, a large company may qualify as a self-insurer.

The firm will be controlled by the investors through ownership of common stock in the corporation, and it anticipates that it will be doing business within the year. The company claims to have a highly trained staff of personnel and will limit itself exclusively to writing workmen's compensation coverage.

This is the second such company recently to begin a business of this type in Montana. The Glacier General Assurance Company started a similar operation in Missoula in 1960 (see **Industrial Horizons**, April 1961).

In the News . . .

Columbia Paint Co., Helena, (see **Industrial Horizons**, April, 1957) recently opened a store in Great Falls. Other stores are located in Spokane, Pocatello, Missoula, Kalispell, Billings, and Helena. The firm manufactures over 100 varieties of paint, including yellow and white highway paint and one for fish hatcheries that retards algae growth.

Big Mountain Ski Resort at Whitefish showed an increase of over 100 per cent in winter revenue over the previous year. Ed Schenck, president of Winter Sports, Inc., owners and operators of the resort, attributed the increase in business to installation of the new 6,800 ft. double chairlift which schussers had available this year in addition to the T-bar, Pomalift, and beginners' rope tow. Also added this year were more guest rooms, a larger cafeteria and Bierstube, and the two-story Hinderman Ski Shop and School.

Schenck reported that there were 67 employes in the resort and 14 in the ski shop and school.

The Mountain, which overlooks scenic Flathead Valley, is also a popular summer resort when shorts and sandals replace stretch pants and skis.

Approved and sent to the President is an appropriation bill of $175,000 for a Forest Service Research Laboratory in Bozeman. Research would be on problems in the utilization and management of lodgepole pine type forests which characterize the region.

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PEAT MOSS

(Continued from page 1)

FOSS PEAT MOSS CO., Sam Foss, President, Hamilton, Montana.

"Peat Pak" comes from a 1,000-acre peat bog in the Bitterroot Valley on the site of an old lake bed. It is marketed throughout the western states—the landscape contractor at Glasgow Air Force Base ordered 250 tons and a California firm wanted 100 railroad carloads.

Foss says that the product has been tested by various private laboratories for purchasing agents of jobbers and wholesalers, as well as by government agencies for government contract purchasers and that the tests show it to be one of the few peat bogs or deposits that will meet the requirements for use by these agencies; that it is of an organic nature on the acid side, completely free of alkali, and has a high nitrogen content.

MOUNTAIN MEADOW ENTERPRISES, INC., Eldon Clare, President, P. O. Box 343, Columbia Falls.

The Flaherty brothers of Columbia Falls package both peat and peat moss. The peat comes from a bog near Glacier National Park where the peat is up to 40 ft. deep. The peat moss is a brown fibrous material that is sawed like ice from a pond near Whitefish.

The peat is drained of excess water by stockpiling, then screened and again dried to proper moisture content by a large forced air propane dryer. After rescreening, it is bagged in polyethelene bags in amounts of from 1 to 25 lbs.

The peat moss is also dried by stockpiling, then ground and packaged in 1 and 2 cu. ft. and 144 cu. in. amounts.

Both the peat and peat moss are excellent soil conditioners. In addition, the products also contain nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, and other nutrients which make it ideal for potting soil.

One of their best outlets is a firm in Calgary. Presently, two men are employed at the plant, and the Flahertys feel that eventually the industry will provide 10 local jobs.

DELPS. E. E. Campkin, President, 504 5th Ave. E., Kalispell.

Delps is a basement-garage do-it-yourself type family enterprise which has been surprisingly successful in less than a year's time.

Campkin obtains peat from a source in Eureka. The peat is trucked to Kalispell and dumped in the Campkin garage. It is then put through a grinder and goes by conveyor belt to a chute from the garage and through a funnel system designed by Campkin. The funnel directs the ground peat into plastic bags of different sizes which are then placed in boxes for shipment. The bagging operation, although partly handpowered, can handle 500 an hour at peak production.

"Mountain Miracle Plant Grow" is being distributed in Spokane and Portland and the Canadian western provinces, besides the local market.

—Hungry Horse News Photo

Peat Moss Bog near Glacier National Park. Besides being used as a soil conditioner and in greenhouses, peat moss has been used as chicken litter and to some extent for insulation in small buildings.

View of a peat stockpile and processing plant.

To Conduct Community Survey, Arrange Financiers Tour

On June 19 a meeting called jointly by the State Chamber of Commerce and the State Planning Board brought together heads of industrial committees of the local chambers from various Montana cities.

Community Survey

During the meeting it was determined that Montana was lacking in complete and updated information on the industrial potential of our communities. Through a cooperative effort of the Chamber of Commerce and the Planning Board, a thorough study is underway to compile an inventory of what our cities have to offer industrial prospects.

At the same gathering Governor Nutter spoke to the group regarding his program for economic expansion, and he reiterated the necessity of industrial development for promoting a prosperous Montana.

Midwest Bankers to Visit

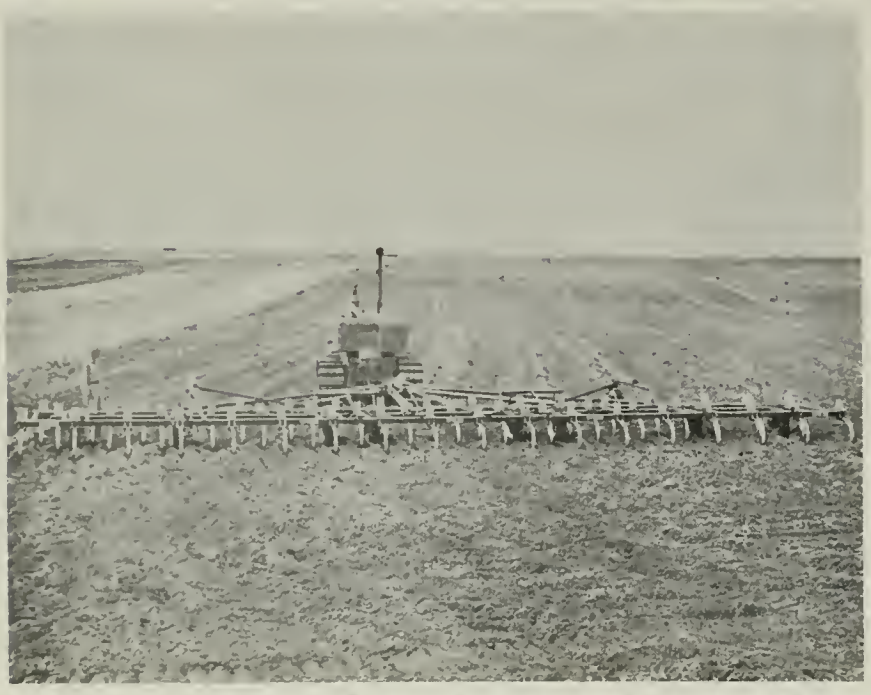
Recognizing that secondary financing is a key to economic expansion in Montana, arrangements are underway to bring a group of Midwest bankers to spend several days viewing investment opportunities in our state. Approximately 30 financiers will arrive on Aug. 28. Their tentative itinerary is as follows: Aug. 28, Whitefish, Kalispell, Polson, and Missoula. Aug. 29, Philipsburg, Anaconda, Buttc, and Helena. Aug. 30, Great Falls. Aug. 31, Billings.

Interesting Publications . . . .

"Federal Income Tax Tips for the Small Timber Owner" (U. S. Forest Service, 1960). Examples cover typical income tax situations of small forest land owners. The explanations may help the timber owner save money and simplify the preparation of his tax return. Copies available from the State Planning Board.

"Free Grass to Fences; the Montana Cattle Range Story." By Robert H. Fletcher. Published for the Historical Society of Montana by University Publishers, New York. 235 pages. 1960. $12.00. Narrative account of the growth of the cattle industry and of the development of the Montana Stockgrowers Association.

Gysler Manufactures Duckfoot



52-ft. Gysler Duckfoot—the largest to be manufactured to date. The firm has been in production for three years, and the unit is steadily becoming a well-known piece of farm equipment in the Northwest.

The latest thing down on the farm these days is the Gysler "Flexible" Duckfoot. It was designed and is now manufactured by Ervin S. Gysler of Fort Benton, president of Gysler Manufacturing Co.

Gysler was an implement dealer for eight years and in talking with farmers and observing competitive units he decided that something a little different should be developed which would improve this basic implement used in tillage operations.

Three Basic Models

The Gysler duckfoot features a 4" square tube frame with 2" by 4" tube front-to-rear members and 5-inch "I" beams for a hitch that makes a practically indestructible unit. An exclusive clamp holds the shank rigidly so it cannot bounce around weeds. A 68" frame depth and practical wheel shank spacing allows for exceptional trash clearance. There are three basic 3-wheel models from 13 to 23 shanks and Gysler will also custom build larger units.

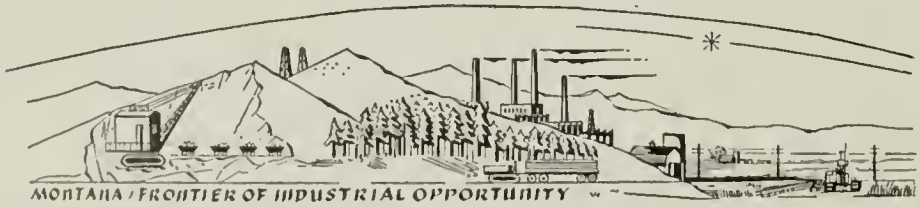
Gysler advises that one of the most important aspects of starting a business such as this is to develop buying connections. He spent five years building up the connections they now have and he says that every new connection means profit for the business, "because, regardless of what it costs, it will only sell for so much." He told the State Planning Board that he would be happy to help anyone getting started along this line..

With the Planning Board . . .

Ingvard Svarre, president of the Yellowstone Livestock Commission, Sidney, has been appointed to the Advisory Council of the State Planning Board. Svarre is a member of the National Wool and Lamb Committee, on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Livestock Markets, immediate past director of the Montana Beef Council, and a director of the Yellowstone Boys Ranch. He was selected as "Stockman of the Year" in 1959 by the National Association of Livestock Auction Markets. He is a native of Denmark.

Director Tom Collins has been elected vice-chairman of the Governor's new Economic Studies Committee. Former U. S. Rep. Wesley A. D'Ewart, Wilsall, was elected chairman, and Jack Hallowell, State Advertising Director, was named secretary.

The committee is composed of representatives of all segments of the state's economy, and its first objective will be to conduct a survey to determine what research information on Montana's economy is already available and where it is located. Following this, the committee plans to suggest various fields which appear promising for economic development within the state.



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